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| **'Twas The Night Before Christmas: Reading Comprehension** |
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"'Twas The Night Before Christmas" is one of the most traditional Christmas readings in English speaking countries. Written in 1822 by Clement C. Moore, "'Twas The Night Before Christmas" tells the story of Santa's arrival on Christmas Eve at a typical American household. Imagine it is Christmas Eve and you are sitting around the fireplace drinking a nice cup of Egg Nog (a typical Christmas drink made with eggs, cinnamon, milk and other ingredients sometimes including a good bit of rum) anxiously awaiting Christmas Eve. Outside the snow is falling and all the family is together. Finally, someone in the family takes out "'Twas The Night Before Christmas"   
  
Before reading you may want to review some of the more difficult vocabulary listed after the story.  
The vocabulary is in the order it appears in "'Twas The Night Before Christmas"  
  
'Twas = It was  
stirring = movement  
nestled = comfortably in place  
'kerchief = handkerchief  
clatter = noise  
sash = window covering that is pulled down from inside the room  
shutters = window covering that is opened from outside the window  
lustre = glow, illumination  
sleigh = Santa Claus' vehicle, also used in Alaska with dogs  
St. Nick = Santa Claus  
Coursers = Animals which draw a sleigh  
Porch = terrace  
dash away = move onwards quickly  
twinkling = a second  
bound = a jump  
tarnished = dirty  
soot = black waste material found inside a chimney  
bundle = bag   
peddler = someone who sells things on the street  
dimples = indentations on the cheeks  
merry = happy  
droll = funny  
encircled = circle around  
belly = stomach  
dread = to be afraid of  
jerk = quick movement  
down of a thistle = the light stuff on a certain type of weed that floats away in the air  
ere = before

**'Twas** The Night Before Christmas, when all through the house  
Not a creature was **stirring**, not even a mouse;

The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,  
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;



The children were nestled all snug in their beds,   
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;

  
And mamma in her **'kerchief**, and I in my cap,  
Had just settled down for a long winter's nap,

  
When out on the lawn there arose such a **clatter**,   
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter

.  
Away to the window I flew like a flash,  
Tore open the **shutters** and threw up the **sash**.

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow  
Gave the **lustre** of mid-day to objects below,

When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,   
But a miniature **sleigh**, and eight tiny reindeer,

  
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,  
I knew in a moment it must be **St. Nick**.

More rapid than eagles his **coursers** they came,  
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;

"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!  
On, Comet! on Cupid! on, Donder and Blitzen!



To the top of the **porch**! to the top of the wall!  
Now **dash away**! dash away! dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,  
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky,

So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,  
With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too.

  
And then, in a **twinkling**, I heard on the roof  
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.

As I drew in my hand, and was turning around,  
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a **bound**.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,  
And his clothes were all **tarnished** with ashes and **soot**;

A **bundle** of toys he had flung on his back,  
And he looked like a **peddler** just opening his pack.

His eyes -- how they twinkled! his **dimples** how **merry**!  
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!

  
His **droll** little mouth was drawn up like a bow,   
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,  
And the smoke it **encircled** his head like a wreath;



He had a broad face and a little round belly,  
That shook, when he laughed like a bowlful of jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,  
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;

A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,  
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to **dread**;



He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,  
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a **jerk**,

And laying his finger aside of his nose,  
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,  
And away they all flew like the **down of a thistle**.

  
But I heard him exclaim, **ere** he drove out of sight,  
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night."

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### 'Twas the Night Before Christmas Reading Comprehension Quiz

How many reindeer pull Santa Claus' sleigh?

a) 6 b) 12 c) 8

Why are there stockings hung by the fire?

a) as a decoration b) to receive presents from Santa Claus c) to keep the children's feet warm

In this story what is "a long winter's nap"?

a) hibernation b) sleep for the night c) a 30 minute rest

Why does the author get out of bed?

a) to get something to eat b) to see what the noise outside is c) to wake the children

What causes so much light outside?

a) the reflection of the moon on the snow b) the street lamps c) it is mid-day

Which animals transport Santa?

1. horses b) dogs c) reindeer

How do they transport Santa Claus and the sleigh?

a) they fly b) they pull the sleigh on the snow c) the sleigh is motor driven

What does Santa have in his bag?

a) toys for the children b) food c) coal

What kind of a figure does Santa have

a) slim b) muscle man c) fat

Is Santa a smoker?

a) yes b) no

What does Santa say to the author?

a) he wants to know how the author is b) he wants to know about the children c) nothing

How does he tell the author not to worry?

a) with a wink of his eye b) he gives the thumbs up sign c) he tells him not to worry

What is Santa's work?

a) cleaning the chimney b) bringing presents to little children c) bringing the Christmas tree

What is the last thing Santa shouts?

a) good-night b) Happy New Year c) Merry Christmas